

Breaking Down the

BARRIERS

Alberta Infrastructure

June 2000

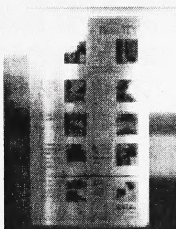
TTY Payphones Installed at Provincially Owned Rest Stops



In February 2000, Alberta Infrastructure and Telus entered into a partnership whereby provincially owned rest

stop areas would be equipped with teletypewriter (TTY) payphones. The project was recommended and initiated by the Alberta Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation.

TTY devices enable the deaf and hard of hearing to communicate over the phone. Messages are typed, displayed on screen and relayed to the recipient.

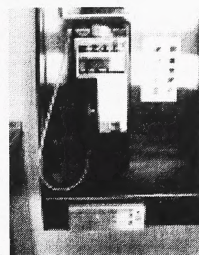


To date, TTYs have been installed at the Dickson-Stevenson, Edson, Ranchland TeePee, and

Wetaskiwin rest stops, and will also be made available at Wandering River as soon as some preliminary alterations have been completed.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to install TTYs at the Valleyview and Kininvie rest stops, as they do not have adequate facilities.

This project would not have happened without the support of Telus who provided the TTY payphones and installed them at their



own expense, and Alberta Infrastructure who made minor alterations to the buildings themselves to facilitate the installation.

For more information about this project, please contact:

Sara Wong

Policy Advisor

Alberta Infrastructure

Phone: (780) 427-9781

E-Mail: sara.wong@gov.ab.ca

Profile – Member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation

Name: Teresa Chase

Occupation: Manager of Residential Services, Parkland
Community Living and Supports Society



How did you become interested in transportation issues?

Ten years ago, I was involved in an inter-agency research project examining issues that prevented access to community resources and services for people with developmental disabilities. During the course of this research, we found that user groups consistently identified transportation as one of the biggest barriers that prevented individuals from fully participating in their community. For individuals with a developmental disability, barrier-free transportation not only included the handi-bus systems but also traditional public transportation. This prompted me to rethink what the real meaning of barrier-free transportation was.

What is your role on the Barrier Free Committee and why did you become involved?

Because of my increased understanding of local transportation issues, I realized that we needed to send a stronger message to our municipal and provincial decision makers around what a “family” of transportation really meant to indi-

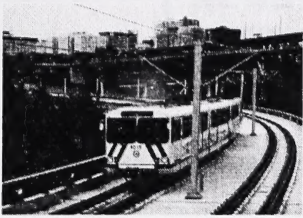
viduals who rely on these systems. I became involved locally in lobbying for changes and increased services. It was through those activities and my daily involvement with people with developmental disabilities that I was approached about becoming a member of this advisory committee. I view my current role on the committee as one of advocacy on behalf of community members with developmental disabilities.

What are the major concerns or issues you have related to accessible transportation?

The financial reality associated with meeting increased demands for barrier-free transportation makes it difficult for our elected representatives to respond in a timely and responsible manner. My biggest concern is that individuals may be left isolated because of this ever increasing demand and lack of resources available to communities.

I see the Advisory Committee as an effective tool in addressing this and other important issues.

Did you know?



Edmonton Transit System, in partnership with Telus, will soon have TTY public payphones installed in all its LRT stations. The City is acting on a recommendation of the Task Force for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing that TTY phones be in place in specific, city-owned public buildings.

TTYs are already located at concourse level in Belvedere, Coliseum, Stadium, Churchill, Central, and University stations. It is anticipated that installation of the phones in Bay, Corona, and Grandin stations will be completed by the end of June. Clareview will have a TTY phone installed in the new LRT station currently planned for construction.

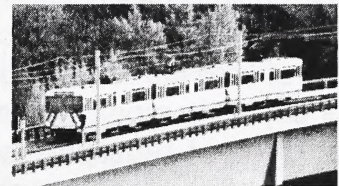
Source: In Transit Newsletter (March 2000), Edmonton Transit System

For further information, please contact:

Edmonton Transit System

Phone: (780) 496-1611

Website: <http://www.gov.edmonton.ab.ca/transit>



Approval of Contract with Edmonton DATS Drivers

The first collective agreement with the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 569 (DATS Unit) was ratified on April 26, 2000. The approximately 150 regular and casual driver employees provide 75 per cent of the DATS service, with the remainder contracted to transportation companies and contractors. Drivers and contracted services are paid on a per trip basis.

This Agreement covers a three-year period and provides increases to the per trip rates of 2.0 per cent in 2000,

2.5 per cent in 2001, and 2.5 per cent in 2002. In addition, the Agreement contains a benefits package and various administrative reforms.

DATS is subsidized by the City and passengers pay a fare with cash, tickets or passes. For further information, please contact:

Dennis Nowicki, Director, DATS

Edmonton Transit System

Phone: (780) 496-4553

E-Mail:

Dennis.Nowicki@gov.edmonton.ab.ca



Parking Policy Review

UPDATE!

The Government of Alberta is currently reviewing its policy on parking placards for persons with disabilities.

In March 2000, copies of a draft "Model for Discussion" were distributed to stakeholders for feedback. The model was developed based on the excellent stakeholder recommendations that Alberta Infrastructure received during the November 1999 forums, and from written and phone submissions.

The model proposes changes to the eligibility criteria, approval process, enforcement and education/awareness provisions – the four key priorities that stakeholders identified as problem areas. In particular, it recommends that:

- the basic eligibility criterion be "unable to walk 50 metres";
- an informal appeal process be established;
- a first-time application form be completed by a physician, occupational therapist or physiotherapist, with applicants signing a declaration form to renew placards;
- a "Code of Practice" be created to outline rules on proper use, enforcement procedures, and consequences of misuse;
- municipalities continue to enforce locally; and
- a government and private sector partnership be formed to launch an education/awareness campaign.

Comments received by stakeholders are being incorporated into a final policy, which hopefully will be in place later this summer.

For more information about this policy review, please contact:

Sara Wong

Policy Advisor

Alberta Infrastructure

Phone: (780) 427-9781

E-mail: sara.wong@gov.ab.ca



Accessible Taxis in Edmonton and Calgary

DATS has arranged a one-year lease extension with Laidlaw Transit Ltd. to permit continuation of the accessible taxi service in Edmonton. However, the 1992 vehicles have seen many kilometers and, despite refurbishment, their commercial operation is drawing to an end. It is expected that the vehicles will be surplussed by July 31, 2000.

DATS has prepared a report entitled **Accessible Taxi Grant Report**, which outlines the state of the accessible taxi program in Edmonton. This report was a condition of the capital grant provided by the Province to assist in vehicle refurbishment. Like many of the reports undertaken previously, the findings indicate that some form of assistance or intervention is required to ensure a viable, accessible taxi fleet.

Preparation of a report is underway that will outline alternatives for the future of accessible taxis, for presentation to City Council's Transportation and Public Works Committee on July 12, 2000.

In Calgary, the success of a vehicle demonstration project has been

encouraging. A GMC Safari van was retrofitted to accommodate one wheelchair or scooter, with favourable reaction from customers. This vehicle costs significantly less than an accessible taxi like those formerly in operation in Calgary, giving hope this will address the issue of high capital cost. Calgary Handi-bus Association, Calgary Transit and Alberta Infrastructure funded the project.

For further information, please contact:

Dennis Nowicki, Director, DATS,
Edmonton Transit System

Phone: (780) 496-4553

E-Mail:

Dennis.Nowicki@gov.edmonton.ab.ca

Pat Pellegrino

General Manager, Calgary Handi-bus
Association, Calgary Transit

Phone: (403) 276-8028

E-Mail: chba@cadvision.com

For a copy of the **Accessible Taxi Grant Report**, please contact:

Sara Wong, Policy Advisor

Alberta Infrastructure

Phone: (780) 427-9781

E-Mail: sara.wong@gov.ab.ca

Driver Training in Vehicles with Modified Controls

Perhaps you would like to take professional driver training in order to obtain an Alberta driver's licence but, because of a physical impairment, you require a vehicle that has specially modified controls.

While it is true that some of the larger driver training schools may have a vehicle with special controls to compensate for physical impairments, the vehicle may not be available where and when you need it, or it may not be modified to suit your particular need. Is there anything you can do?

You bet there is! Alberta legislation allows you to use your own vehicle at a commercial driver training school if that vehicle is modified to compen-

sate for a physical impairment. Section 27 of the **Driver Training Regulation** states that the requirement for driver training schools to have special insurance and special equipment for all their driver training vehicles does not apply to a motor vehicle that "is designed with special or modified controls to compensate for a physical impairment of a student driver and is provided by that student driver".

If you have any questions regarding this issue or any other issue related to driver training, please feel free to contact a Driver Programs Administrator at (780) 427-8901 if in Edmonton, or dial 310-0000 if outside Edmonton.

New Visitor Information Centre Signs in Alberta

Visiting motorists entering Alberta will notice new highway signs at several Travel Alberta Visitor Information Centres (VIC's) in the province. The provincial gateway entrances include: Highway 4 (Milk River), Highway 3 (Crownsnest Pass), TransCanada Highway (Walsh and Canmore), and Yellowhead Highway (Lloydminster).

A new Travel Alberta VIC opened this spring on Highway 16 at Hinton.



Another VIC is also being planned for Highway 43 in the Grande Prairie area. The new visitor information signs are a joint project between Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Economic Development.

The new blue sign is brighter and easier to read, showing white lettering on a blue background, and using standardized symbols for easy interpretation of services available at the facility. Standard letter heights are also being used for easier reading while driving at highway speeds.

The top left corner of the sign is reserved for a 200 mm (8 inch) x 200 mm (8 inch) wheelchair symbol, signifying that the facility meets barrier free requirements. The placement and inverted colour convention of the

accessibility symbol provides easy recognition by motorists and passengers.

The possibility of adding symbols for persons with sight and hearing impairments is being considered.

For more information about this project, please contact:
Robert Duckworth
Traffic Standards Engineer
Alberta Infrastructure
Phone: (780) 415-1047
E-mail: robert.duckworth@gov.ab.ca



TTY Payphones at the Calgary International Airport



TTYs recently became an issue at Calgary International Airport when a person who is deaf and requires a TTY device filed a complaint with the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) about the lack of a TTY device at every bank of payphones, and the lack of adequate signage.

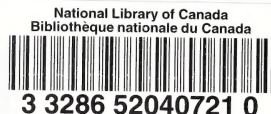
In a recent decision, the CTA found that the number of TTY devices and the signage did not constitute an undue obstacle to the complainant's mobility. However, it did note that there were no TTY devices beyond the security checkpoints. It referred

the airport operator to the CTA's report, **Communication Barriers: A Look at Barriers to Communication Facing Persons with Disabilities Who Travel by Air.**

The Calgary Airport Authority reviewed the matter with its Barrier-Free Advisory Council. As a result, it has since installed a TTY device beyond each security checkpoint and upgraded all appropriate signage.

Source: Moving Ahead (Winter 2000), Canadian Transportation Agency

Did you know?



The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities is in the preliminary stages of developing a Provincial Disability Strategy – an overall umbrella policy to guide government and agencies when developing policy that will have an impact upon Albertans with disabilities.

Last November, the Council began work on this ambitious project by holding public meetings in six Alberta centres: Bonnyville, Grande Prairie, High Level, Edmonton, Calgary and Medicine Hat. The goal was simple: gain an understanding of what Albertans with disabilities want to see included in such a strategy.

Approximately 425 people attended the meetings. The input collected at these meetings will be included in the development of a Provincial Disability Strategy.

Source: Status Report (February 2000), Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

For more information, please contact:
Tom Fowler
Manager, Premier's Council
Phone: (780) 422-1095
E-mail: tom.fowler@gov.ab.ca

Breaking Down the Barriers is published by Alberta Infrastructure to provide information about transportation issues of interest to persons with disabilities and related organizations. It is distributed to municipalities, service providers, provincial organizations and consumer groups in Alberta. To be added to the distribution list, phone (780) 427-7944 or dial 310-0000 for a toll free connection outside Edmonton. The views and opinions expressed in **Breaking Down the Barriers** do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board or Alberta Infrastructure. Any article in this publication may be reproduced, provided credit is given to the newsletter.

Editorial Board:

Peter Dawes, Senior Policy Advisor,
Passenger Transportation, Policy
and Planning,
Tel. (780) 415-0687,
Fax (780) 422-1070, or
e-mail peter.dawes@gov.ab.ca

Sara Wong, Policy Advisor,
Surface Passenger and Barrier Free
Transportation, Policy and Planning,
Tel. (780) 427-9781,
Fax (780) 422-1070, or
e-mail sara.wong@gov.ab.ca

John Tuckwell, Editor,
Communications,
Tel. (780) 422-0432,
Fax (780) 466-3166, or
e-mail john.tuckwell@gov.ab.ca